

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 15, 2022

Mr. Tae D. Johnson  
Acting Director  
Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
Department of Homeland Security  
500 12th Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Acting Director Johnson:

We write to express concern and outrage regarding reports that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) released the identities of more than 6,000 immigrants who are seeking asylum in the United States.<sup>1</sup> We believe that ICE's failure to comply with simple regulations to protect asylum seekers has potentially endangered the lives of these vulnerable individuals and their families and urge you to take immediate action to ensure the privacy of this and other sensitive information held by the agency.

As you know on November 28, ICE posted the names, birthdates, nationalities, and locations of more than 6,000 immigrants who claimed to be fleeing torture and persecution on the agency's website. The data, according to reporting, was online for five hours before the agency took down the information.

We are deeply troubled by this news because federal law mandates that the information of people seeking asylum is to be kept confidential. Several of us frequently receive visits from individuals risking life and livelihood to help their communities thrive in the face of repressive regimes. Some of these courageous individuals go on to seek asylum in the United States – and it is unacceptable to put their information into the hands of bad actors.

While we expect ICE to have a strong and swift response to this incident, we have many questions about current ICE policies, the security lapses that led to this release, and how ICE intends to address this incident and protect these individuals. Specifically, we ask that you please answer the following:

1. What are ICE's current policies regarding its handling of the sensitive, private information of asylum seekers? How is this information currently protected? How did this data breach happen?
2. After ICE was notified by Human Rights First that the data breach had occurred, how long did the agency take to remove the information from its website? How long did it take for those impacted by the breach to be notified?
3. Has ICE done anything to aid those who may be most at risk of retaliation due to this data breach? And if so, please explain the specific actions being taken.
4. After the breach, ICE issued [a statement](#) that it was investigating the incident – when will the findings of the investigation be available? Can you commit to releasing said findings to our offices and the public as well?

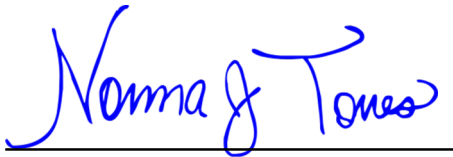
---

<sup>1</sup> Hamed Aleaziz, ICE accidentally released the identities of 6,252 immigrants who sought protection in the U.S., *LOS ANGELES TIMES*, (Nov. 30, 2022, 6:04 PM), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-11-30/ice-released-names-6252-immigrants-persecution>.

5. How many times was this information downloaded? Can ICE verify the locations of where the information was downloaded? Were any downloads in countries that these individuals are claiming asylum from?
6. The article exposing this error states that the federal government will ask individuals who downloaded this information to delete it - is there not more that can be done to ensure this information does not spread further?
7. What corrective measures are being taken by ICE to ensure that a data breach like this will not happen in the future?
8. Should any individual, or set of individuals, be found accountable for the data breach, what corrective measures will ICE be taking?
9. In light of increased resources provided to ICE through the Fiscal Year 2022 funding bill (Public Law 117-103), how can Congress best work with ICE to protect the data of asylum-seekers?

Thank you for your attention to these important questions. We look forward to working with you to improve the policies and procedures regarding the privacy and safety of those seeking asylum in the United States.

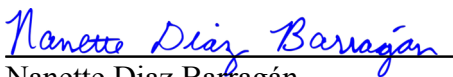
Sincerely,



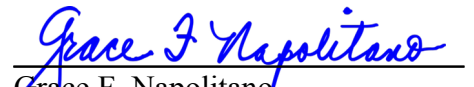
Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress



Sherla Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



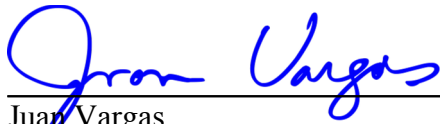
---

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



---

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



---

Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



---

Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



---

Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



---

Tony Cardenas  
Member of Congress



---

André Carson  
Member of Congress